

## UNIFIED SOCIAL SPACE AS A RESULT OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN EUROPE

Jarmila VIDOVÁ, Peter SIKÁ

**Abstract**

*The result of the integration process should be unified social space, supplementing the single market of the European Union with a centralized legislative background and adoption of European standards in the legislation of the Member States. The consolidation of individual economies of states to create a common area to allow free movement of people, respectively, migrate to the population of each Member State. Inequalities economies that encourage different groups of people to search for their basic needs in economically more established countries. Migration has thus become one of the main themes of EU policy management. The issue of migration and the need for migration policy within the EU is closely linked with freedom of movement of persons as one of the four freedoms of the EU grouping. Managing migration has become a necessity in an area without borders between member countries as activity respectively inactivity neighboring countries can have a direct impact on the other as a whole. The paper research the reasons exodus from Slovakia, respectively reasons for their return to Slovakia.*

**Key words**

*integration, migration, the single market, social tourism, social policy, migration flows*

**JEL Classification:** P25, R31, Q42

**Introduction**

Freedom of movement and residence of persons guarantee fundamental human rights and freedoms enacted in individual states and from the historical point of view also important contractual documents. An important law from the point of view of our citizens is Act No. 460/1992 Constitution of the Slovak Republic which, in Article 23 1 says: "Freedom of movement and residence is guaranteed. From the historical point of view, the Treaties which dealt with the freedom of movement of citizens began to be adopted: On March 25, 1957, the Treaty of Rome - the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community was founded on the belief that economic development should bring social progress towards the creation of a common market Normalization of social systems

The Treaty of Lisbon has changed the existing EC Treaties without replacing them. The Union provides the legal framework and tools needed to meet future challenges and meet citizens' expectations. The Treaty of Lisbon not only preserved existing rights but also introduced new ones. In particular, it guarantees the freedoms and principles laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and gives it legal effect. These are civic, political, economic and social rights (Dudová, 2014). One of the fundamental freedoms is the free movement of persons and the preservation of freedom of movement

between countries. This is not only about the possibility of moving people easily within the Community but, above all, with the possibility of changing their place of residence for work or business purposes, that is to say, the possibility of settling and working as well as doing business in the territory of any State.

At present, the freedom of movement of persons within Europe is uncontrollable and massive, while it is clear that current immigrants in these countries do not even plan to work and thus participate in the development of the country, but rather benefit from its social system. This uncontrollable migration causes the indignation of the domestic population, resulting in a gradual tightening of entitlements to social benefits, thus disturbing the basic European Union principle of a unified view across the population of the European Union, which can ultimately lead to the collapse of the European Union. This is evidenced by the United Kingdom referendum on subsistence in the European Union, which took place on 23 June 2016, with a clear result of the leave of the United Kingdom from the European Union. Tense tensions in the area of social benefits did not help to appease even the agreement between the leaders of the European Union and London over the abuse of social benefits in the UK, which could require a four-year limitation of social benefits for incoming workers from other European Union countries, and limit the allowances for foreign children do not lived in the UK. The agreement shows that such a restriction on social

benefits can also be used by the other Member States of the European Union. Gradually, countries with a high influx of European migrants are beginning to apply these restrictions to their legislation.

## 1. Social policy and social tourism

Social policy in the EU is based on the social aspects of the market economy and is based on geopolitical and historical experience. Policy is one of the EU's policies, which is not solved in most cases centrally, but the EU institutions only coordinate the action of individual Member States in this area. It is related to the overcoming of differences in social policy in the individual countries resulting from different labour, political and social traditions. It monitors the fulfilment of three main functions (Stanek, 2011, p. 40):

- provide a legislative Framework for specific areas, create a space for dialogue between the social partners and thereby contribute to the definition of the basic social rights of workers
- Gather sufficient funding to finance the objectives, in particular in the field of vocational training and employment policy, thus contributing to the redistribution of resources; and
- Stimulate and support co-operation between different actors in social policy, networking and partnership, organize exchanges of information and experience, promote innovation and good practice.

It is not possible to unify the social systems of all the countries of the European Union under Scharp (2002), nor would it be that the general resistance of the Member States to the implementation of pan-European technocratic solutions that would distort diversity among member countries would arise. Beblavý (2012, p. 154) states that a more realistic goal could be to establish accepted diversity in areas that are not reformable for pan-European legislation. It further states that the most likely scenario is the gradual convergence of social systems in countries with a similar approach to social policy or similar social problems, thus achieving greater coherence and profiling of groups of states according to the type of social systems.

The basic framework of the European Union's social policy is to eliminate inequalities between citizens and countries externally, based on the application of the principles of justice, solidarity, subsidiarity and participation.

### 1.1 Migration flows and social tourism

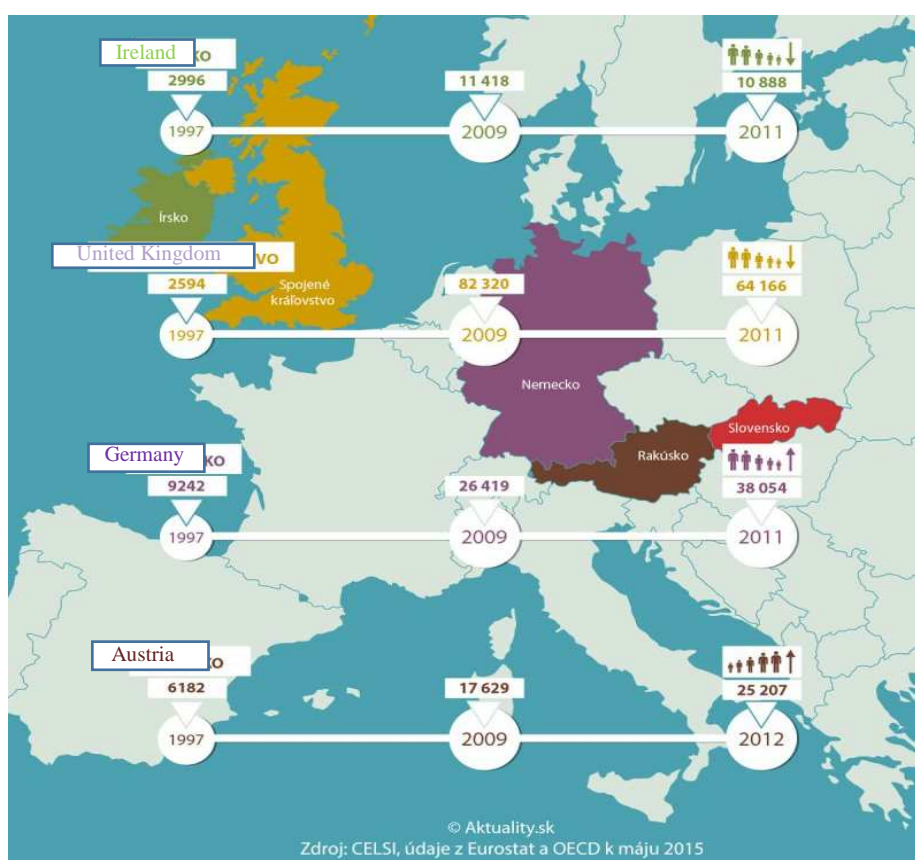
By integrating the economies in Europe, a common territory has been created which has enabled the free movement of persons and the possible migration of the population into individual Member States. Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, political and social factors: either in the country of origin of the migrant (pressure factors) or in the target country (motivation factors). Neoclassical economic theory has highlighted the fact that people move mainly from low-income areas to areas where the wage level is higher. In the literature, however, neo-classical economic theory is criticized in particular for abstracting from many factors that can be significant in explaining migratory movements. Haas (2008) has expanded migration flows depending on the psychological, working and other socio-economic motives of individuals. Economic inequalities have prompted various populations to seek to meet basic needs in economically better-founded countries. Migration has thus become one of the main topics of EU policy governance (Petrus, 2003). Movement of persons or groups of persons in the geographical and social space associated with temporary or permanent change of residence. The issue of migration and the need to introduce migration policy within the EU are closely linked to the possibility of free movement of persons as one of the four freedoms within the EU group.

Migration management has become a necessity in an area without frontiers between individual Member States, since the action or inaction of the neighbouring state can directly affect others as a whole. Poorly managed migration can undermine the social cohesion of the target countries and harm the countries of origin and the immigrants themselves, and legal migration is an opportunity to benefit migrants, their countries of origin (benefit from the financial transfers of their migrants) and Member States (Dudová, 2014). Most studies focusing on the impact of migration on household members who remained in the country of origin have shown positive impacts both in the short and long term. Rapoport and Docquier (2006) show how remittances are used in the country of origin. Their main purpose is to repay loans to finance migration or education as well as insurance. Remittances, despite targeting specific households, do not only affect families and communities. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in its Policy Coherence for Development (2007) study, defines two dimensions of the impact of remittances. Within the micro dimension, the effects of the remittance influx are reflected at the level of a particular migrant-friendly household, while in the case of a macro-dimension the

size is much larger and perceives the importance of remittances for the entire economy of the country, as well as the state's own access to emigration and subsequent financial support Families in the country of origin. The most frequent reason for migration to the European Union is political migration, social migration, environmental and, above all, economic migration. Economic migration is the migration of the population to another state, caused by an attempt to improve the economic status of migrants, particularly through the use of more favourable conditions on the target country's labour market, social system conditions, (Lipková, 2011).

The importance of the free movement concept of persons has changed since its inception. The first provisions on this subject at the time of the EEC's establishment in 1957 concerned the free movement of persons and freedom of establishment, that is, individuals. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the concept of EU citizenship automatically for each person who holds the nationality of a Member State. EU citizenship is the basis for the right of persons to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon confirmed this right and included the general provisions on the area of freedom, security and justice (Neville, 2016).

Picture: 1 Migration of Slovak citizens for work



Source: EUROSTAT. 2015

Part of the basis of social tourism, respectively, have become integrative processes in the EU that have emerged gradually. History has long since remembered the wandering of families. The factors that motivate such movements are many. They were usually forced to leave on a permanent basis as a result of the depletion of livelihoods, sudden natural and climatic changes, epidemics, overthrows, wars and job losses, or the inability to find a job. Significant immigrants have come to Europe already

in the past. Significant intensity occurred after the Second World War, first in the UK and France as a result of the confrontation of the mother countries with the inhabitants of the former colonies, later in the 1960s and in other European countries. Since then, Europe has also become a center of migrant interest.

During 2014, 3.8 million people were migrating to the EU-28 and 2.8 million people were moved out. These overall figures do not represent migration flows from or to the EU as a whole, as they also include

flows between individual EU Member States. Of these 3.8 million immigrants in 2014, 1.6 million non-EU citizens, 1.3 million citizens of other EU Member States, 870,000 people who migrated to the Member State of citizenship and approximately 12,400 people without nationality.

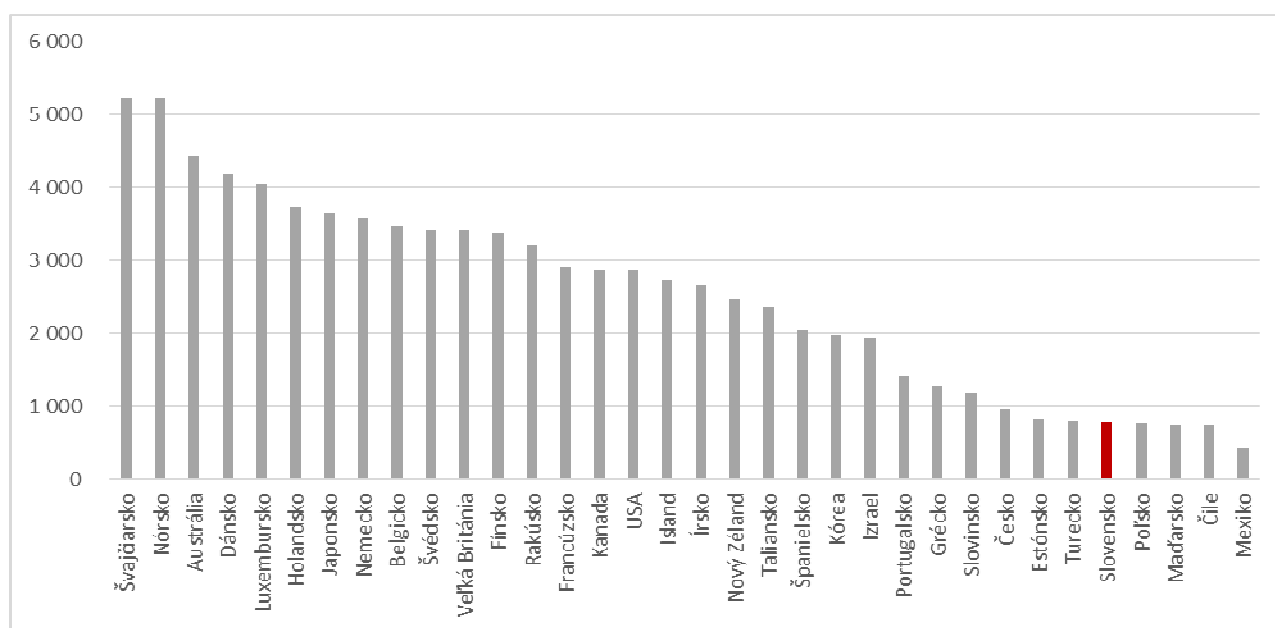
The highest total number of immigrants was recorded in 2014 by Germany (884,900), followed by the United Kingdom (632,000), France (339,900), Spain (305,500) and Italy (277,600). The highest number of emigrants in 2014 was recorded by Spain (400 400), followed by Germany (324 200), the United Kingdom (319 100), France (294 100) and Poland (268 300). A total of 15 EU Member States recorded higher immigration in 2014 than emigration but in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and the three Baltic Member States the number of emigrants

was higher than the number of immigrants (www.ec.europa.eu).

Immigration to non-EU countries in the European Union reached 1.9 million in 2014 and 1.8 million people moved to another Member State than they had before.

Social tourism is also a consequence of social and political frustration in the country, the impossibility of recruiting or integrating into a standard life cycle. The Montreal Declaration addresses the issue of social tourism and, in particular, how the social tourism will look in the coming years. The Montreal Declaration characterizes the social tourism in Article 3 as a goal to make tourism accessible to all, including families, young people and the elderly, necessarily means engaging in the fight against inequality and exclusion of those who are different from those who are limited by means and abilities or those living in developing countries.

**Picture 2: Average gross wage in €**

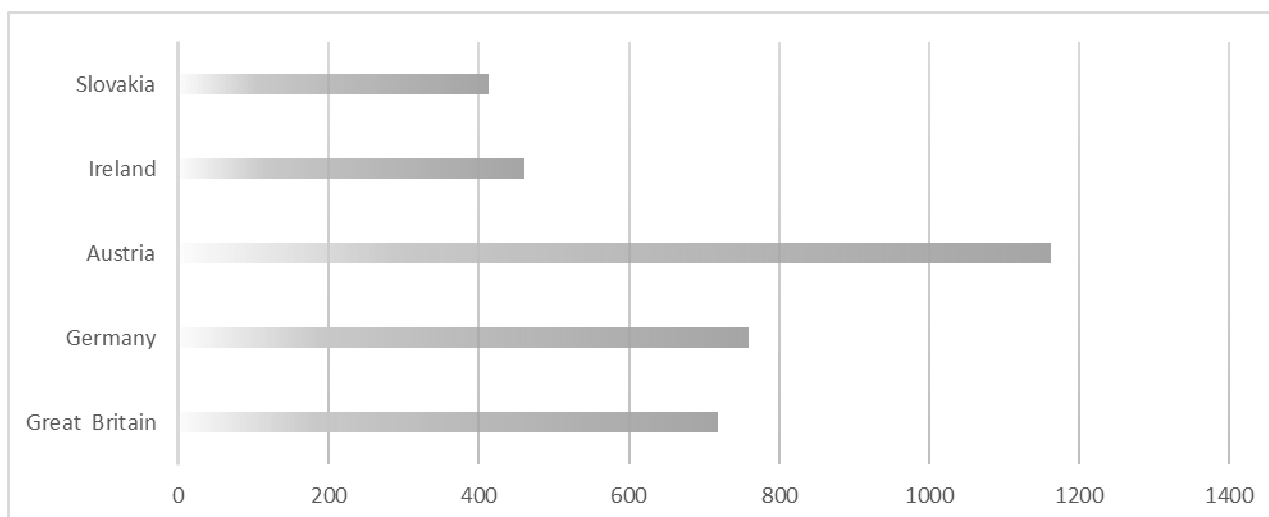


Source: Own data processing EUROSTAT. 2015

We must recognize that the free movement of workers within the European Union is beneficial for the countries because employers have access to a cheaper workforce that can make products cheaper to make them more competitive and to fill vacancies that are not within the country of interest, respectively. There is not enough qualified labor. However, the problem is social tourism, where it is purely to obtain more generous social benefits than in home countries. Unless the European Union responds flexibly to this fact, its lax behavior will endanger free movement of

persons as one of the basic principles on which it was built.

The motivation factor for migration is the amount of the pension. In countries where citizens of the Slovak Republic are most likely to leave, they are higher. This avoids the motivation of citizens to return to the Slovak Republic. It is economically advantageous for them to stay in a country where they work for many years and have the opportunity to apply for a pension. For comparison, we mention the amount of minimum pensions in the countries where the Slovaks most often travel for work.

**Picture 3: Minimum retirement age in €**

Source: Own data processing EUROSTAT. 2015

Significant impact on job mobility also affects apartment ownership in the context of the income situation. Low wage rates combined with high real estate costs cause increased work migration and increased interest in property rental.

## 2. Empirical research and its results

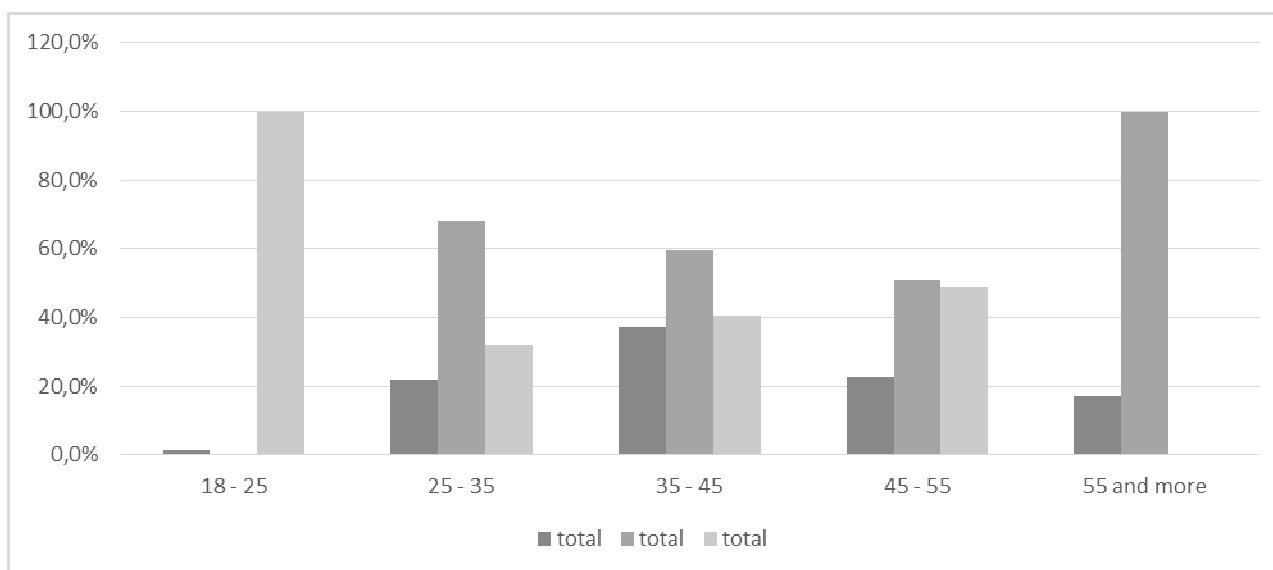
For the purposes of our research, we will focus on migration flows between the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom. Its main reason is the lack of job offers on the domestic labour market and, last but not least, the amount of wages and social benefits. In the UK, Slovaks are working in different positions - from scavengers, through vendors, cleaners or as au-pair. They are ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> among all nationalities living in Britain. In 2011, we became the fastest growing group. The number of Slovaks in Britain has grown by 600 percent over the last six years. In the country according to the data of the Centre for labour, social affairs and family, works currently more than 70,000 Slovaks. The amount of the salary is tempting. According to the UK Central Statistics Office, the average UK wage for 2014 is about € 2,378 while in

2016 it is € 3,425. The average wage in Slovakia was € 883 for the year 2015. According to official sources, most Slovaks are working in the administration, followed by hotels and agriculture.

Fact of motivation to departure of Slovaks abroad was the subject of questionnaire survey, which was aimed at identifying the specific reasons for leaving and at the same time ascertaining why they want to stay abroad. 500 respondents were interviewed in the survey and are currently working abroad. 339 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey, which is a 67.8% success rate.

The survey was attended by 65.5% of women and 34.5% of men and respondents were in the age range from 18 years to 55 years and over. Of these, 81.5% of the respondents were aged between 25 and 55 years, with the highest number of respondents aged 35-45 years, 37%, 49% of women and 51% of men. The majority of respondents were 75% of those with a secondary school leaving education, of which 43% were women and 18.5% were male. 23% of respondents were university graduates and 12% were apprentices.

**Picture 4: Breakdown of respondents by age scales**

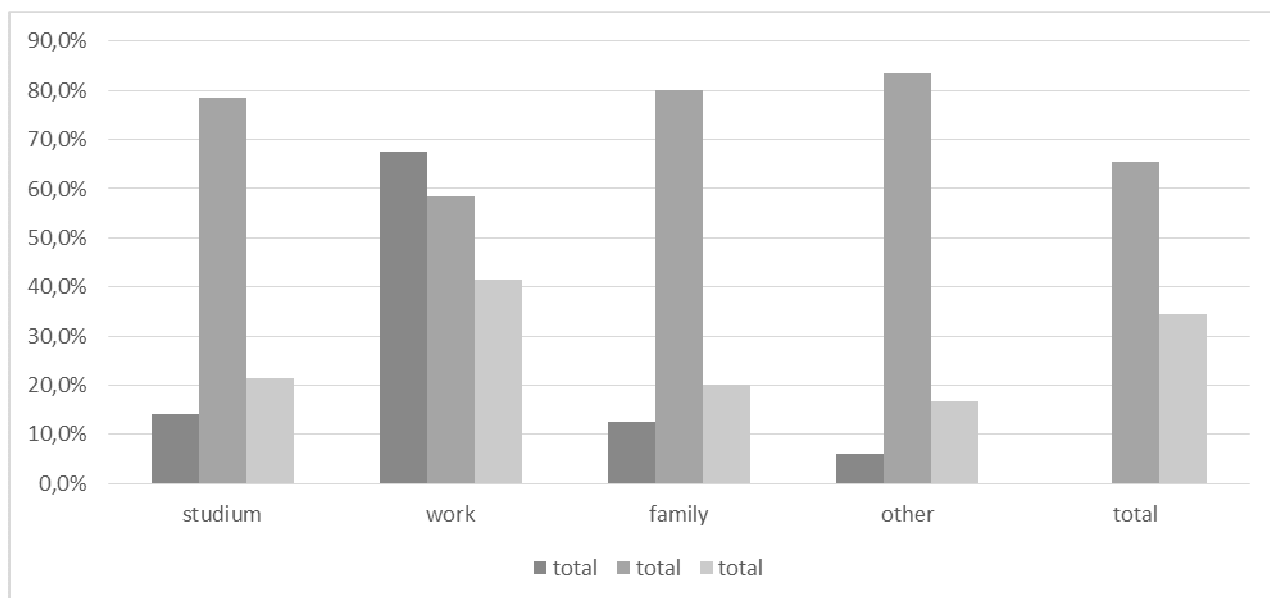


Source: The results of the authors' own research

In the questionnaire survey, we determined the reasons for leaving abroad. Up to 67.5% go abroad for work, of which 58.51% are women and 41.49% are

men. Another reason is study, which was reported by 14% of respondents and 5% of respondents mentioned other reasons for leaving abroad.

**Picture 5: Reasons for leaving abroad**

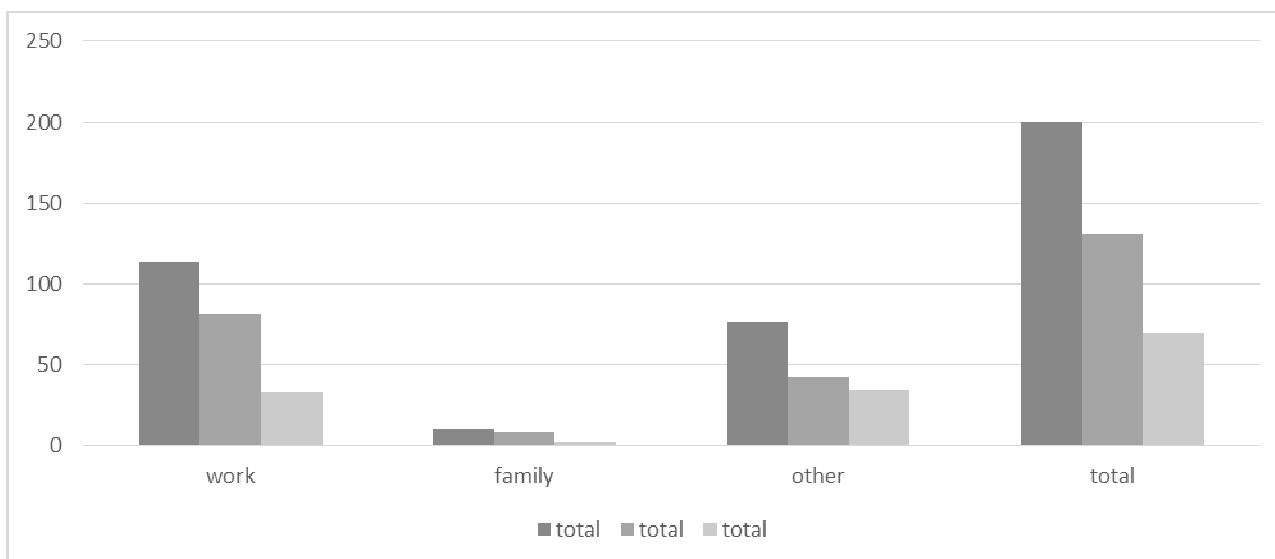


Source: The results of the authors' own research

By analysing the length of the respondents' stay, we found that the majority of respondents live abroad in the period of 5 to 10 years it is 75%. Less than 5 years are 19% of respondents staying abroad. 31% of respondents are living abroad ten years or more.

An important part of the survey was whether the respondent planned to stay abroad and why, and whether they planned to return to Slovakia. Figure 6 shows that the reason for return is primarily family.

**Picture 6: Reasons for permanent residence of respondents abroad**

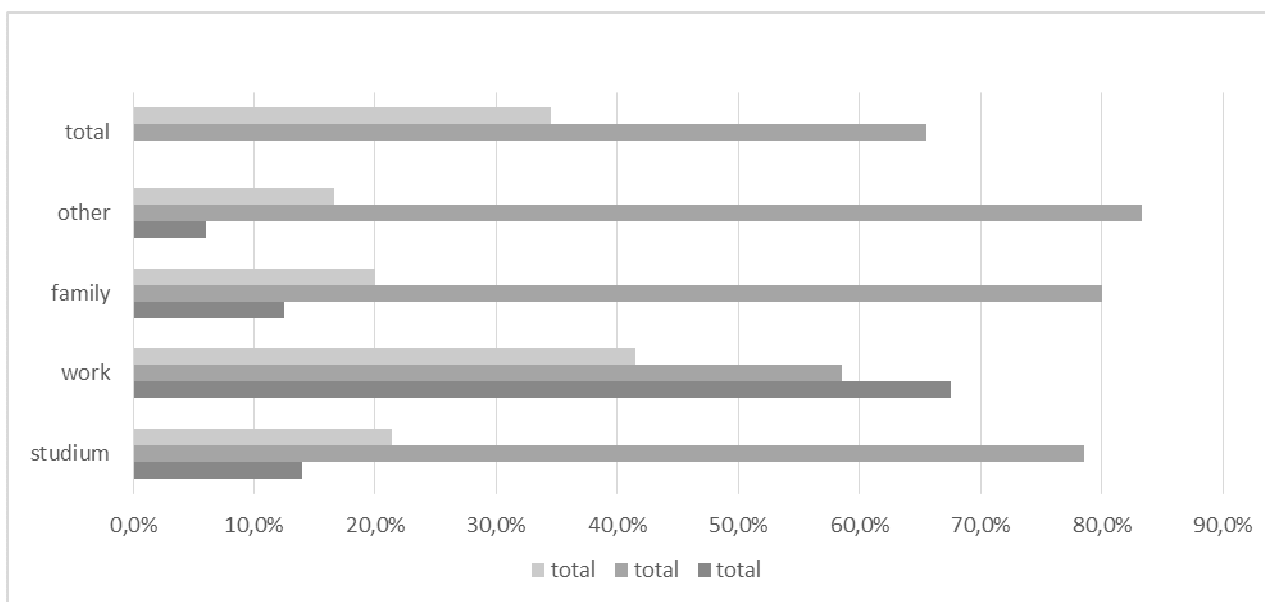


Source: The results of the authors' own research

As regards the reasons for the stay of respondents abroad, they had the opportunity to choose from several options: the preference of family relationships, work or other reasons. Graph 7 shows the results of

the survey. Of the total number of respondents, most of the reason for staying abroad is labor, especially for men, less for women. Women prefer returning for the family, less for work.

**Picture 7: Reasons for return of respondents from abroad**



Source: The results of the authors' own research

**Conclusion**

Base of the information from the questionnaire survey, it is necessary to evaluate several reasons that influence the departure of our citizens abroad. One of the most common reasons is leaving for work,

keeping it stable, and obtaining better and longer-term income. This is one of the important issues that need to be addressed in our economy. An analysis of the questionnaire survey points to the reasons for the emergence of the social tourism. Evaluated are the most common reasons for leaving, namely work,

family and education. Respondents have identified as an adequate assessment of work one of the reasons they plan to improve the quality of their lives. From leaving, they expected work with higher earnings and higher living standards for their families. At the same time, one of the reasons is raising the level of education, qualifications and leaving for study. Last but not least, the reasons for leaving are also due to the amount of social benefits, which are the main reasons for social tourism.

Important questions from the questionnaire include a return to Slovakia and the reason for return to Slovakia. In all of our responses, overlapping work and family as the most common reasons. This shows that in all areas, the economic and social aspects of quality of life are the most important for citizens.

Government of the Slovak Republic by resolution no. 368 of July 8, 2015 established a Support Scheme for the return of experts from abroad. The aim of the scheme is to create a sufficiently attractive stimulus for the return of specialists to Slovakia by reducing or partial compensation of existing barriers and transaction costs. Citizens of the Slovak Republic who were established abroad would be able to make a positive impact on the direction of the Slovak society or the improvement of public services, in general governance, possibly by improving the quality of science, research and higher education, in the event of

their return to Slovakia by using their experience and contacts abroad for an education, and, last but not least, they could engage in civil society (MŠVVaŠ SR, 2017). The scheme is designed for two target groups, Young professionals - citizens of the Slovak Republic up to 40 years of age with completed university studies (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree) abroad with the possibility of obtaining financial support up to a maximum of EUR 10 000 and experts - citizens who are professionally working abroad for more than 10 years in the position of highly qualified employees (I.e. a post requiring completed higher education) with the possibility of obtaining financial support of up to EUR 50,000. Support is conditional on the fact that the applicants are citizens of the Slovak Republic with future employment within the public sector bodies and institutions. During the year 2016, 4 calls were made, where 8 positions were occupied, 4 positions for a young expert and 4 positions for an expert. This low interest clearly shows that citizens do not make a significant interest in a return to Slovakia.

*VEGA 1/0002/16 Socio-ekonomické aspekty bytovej politiky v kontexte migrácie pracovnej sily. Doba riešenia projektu 2016 – 2018. VEGA 1/0810/15. Input-output analýza európskej integrácie. Doba riešenia projektu 2015 – 2017.*

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